

Lifting the cross-ownership ban to allow further media consolidation will not serve the public interest.

Elimination of this rule will essentially signal the absorption of the newspaper business into the television industry, with a negative impact on the quality of print journalism. Newspaper companies "see savings in news gathering by combining with TV stations as a big plus," an industry analyst told the L.A. Times (9/14/01), giving an indication that the newly merged megacompanies would provide communities with less news, not more.

Chairman Powell's move to concentrate media power into only a few powerful hands be another step backward for our remaining press freedoms. It is a frightening move at a frightening time in our history. At a time of crisis, the dangers of such overwhelming concentration in media are more glaring than ever. The changes underway will make U.S. media even less diverse, more commercial and less accountable to the public.